OCTOBER 2008

IMPRESSIONS

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER • FOUNDED 1857

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The Washtenaw County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Information

Published Seven Times A Year
From September-May.

Museum On Main Street
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Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336

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Web Site:
www.washtenawhistory.org

Annual dues: January-December individual, $15; couple/family $25; student or senior (60+) $10; senior couple $19; business/association $50; patron $100.

RICHARD L. GALANT, PhD

President's Letter

Our current exhibition, ***The YMCA – Serving the Ann Arbor Community for 150 Years***, will be up until Saturday, November 22. It will be followed by ***Model Trains & Toys***, which will run through January 25, 2009. Our exhibition committee meets regularly to plan upcoming exhibitions and interesting topics are in the planning stages.

The volunteer editor of our newsletter, *Washtenaw Impressions*, has reluctantly had to resign this post. Patti Smith's new life venture, teaching visually challenged children in the Detroit area, does not allow her to time to commit to working on *Impressions*. We enjoyed working with Patti and certainly admire her work with challenged children.

Sue Kosky, a long-time WCHS board member and Museum Shop coordinator, has also tendered her resignation because of additional family duties and needs. Sue has managed the Museum Shop for several years and has increased the museum stock available considerably. Sue will remain with our Society as a Director-at-Large and continue as an advisor. We truly appreciate her service that included other work on the board, chair of last year's Sesquicentennial celebration, and member of the Garden Ladies.

Like other volunteer organizations, our Society works hard to attract volunteers for various tasks around the Museum on Main Street. A post card was mailed recently to members and donors bringing attention to our need for docents. We are suggesting a four-hour commitment once a month on weekends when the museum is open.

We have other tasks that might appeal to volunteers. While our building was being restored, Karen O'Neal regularly took photographs of the progress, copies of which have filled a half-dozen photo albums. What needs to be done is to evaluate the collection, purge the duplicates and/or unnecessary images, and write captions for the remaining photos.

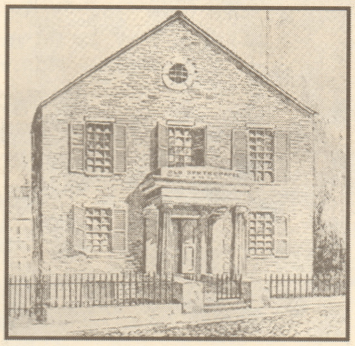
Similarly, during the Grand Opening of the Museum on Main Street in May 1999, Karen O'Neal took a series of wide-angle pictures of the audience that was watching the ceremonial cutting of the ribbon. We would like to have all the people in the photo identified, for historical purposes before we forget who they were.

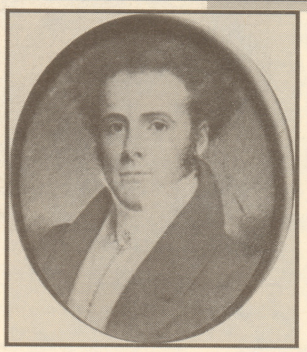
Lastly, and a long-term task, is to work with Pauline Walters to continue to sort and file all the material that has accumulated and been 'shoved in drawers and in out-of-sight boxes.' Pauline is usually at the museum daily between 10 am and 4 pm; and she would welcome help – either by drop-ins or by appointment.

Our Society depends on its members and friends for support and inspiration. We value all of you.

The Ann Arbor YMCA from 1858 to 2008: Serving the Ann Arbor Community for 150 Years

1851 – 1st YMCA in USA founded in Boston





Captain Thomas Sullivan

Board of Directors-Ann Arbor City YMCA Founded in 1897

LEFT TOP: Thomas Sullivan was a former sea captain who heard of the YMCA meetings in England and brought it to the shores of Boston in 1851 – founding the Old South Church in Boston. Soon, YMCAs were popping up all across the country at amazing speed, usually along transportation lines.

RIGHT BOTTOM: An Ann Arbor YMCA Chapter opened in 1868 and was re-established in 1892 by Charles W. Wagner. He said, "We felt that the young men of the town desired some place besides saloons and pool rooms where they could gather together for social good times and recreation."

BACK ROW: Robert Christman, Martin Haller, Francis Hamilton, Fred Schumacher, George Stimson, McCllen Mack, Wm. Goodyear, Fred Weinberg.
BOTTOM ROW: Geo. Pont, Fred Belser, Nate Stanger, Ed. Seyler, C. W. Wagner, Alfred C. Schairer, E. S. Gilmore, Arthur Mummery, George Moore, Alvick Pearson.

In 1894, the YMCA rented space on the second floor of 12 E. Washington over Malloy's Harness Shop. The listing of the officers, directors and committees, at the time, was "like a directory of the influential *Who's Who in Ann Arbor*."

In the early years, the Y was handicapped by a lack of equipment and facilities, but the fundamental purpose of the association, "the building of character," was not neglected. Many prominent men in business and social affairs came under the influence of the Y.

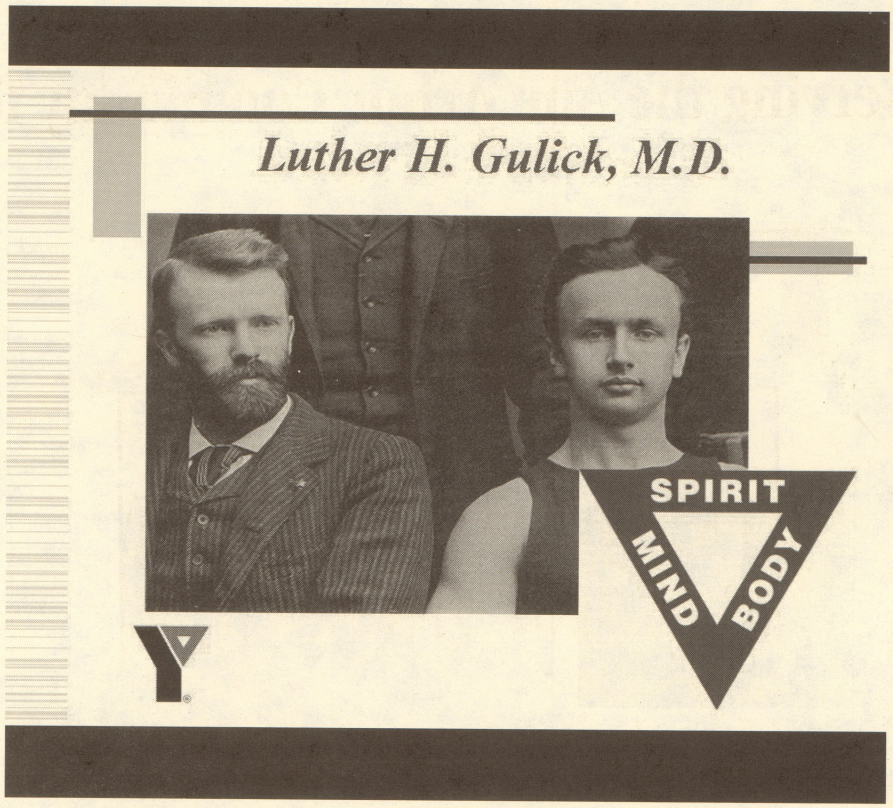
RIGHT TOP:

Luther Gulick was born in Hawaii of missionary parents. His first Y job was Physical Director at Jackson, Mississippi Y. He earned his MD from New York State University in 1889 at age 23.

Gulick started at Springfield College as Superintendent of Physical Training Department and stayed 18 years. He was one of the fathers of a scientific approach to physical education, which included the study of anatomy and physiology.

But most of all he was committed to education and Christianity – "Muscular Christianity." He was also the first marketing guy in YMCA history – he created the Y triangle symbol and the phrase "spirit, mind and body."

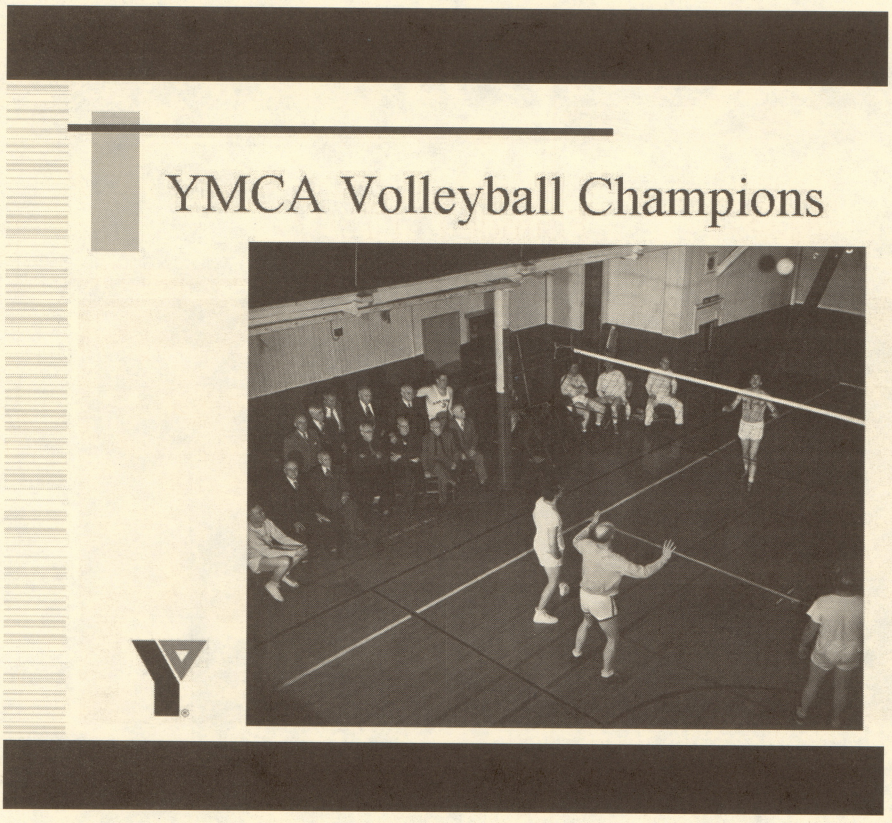
With his wife Charlotte, he started Campfire Girls in 1912.



RIGHT BOTTOM:

One of the biggest heroes of the Ann Arbor YMCA was Viggo Nelson who served as the YMCA General Secretary until1936. Viggo played fullback on the 1920 University of Michigan football team and secured his job with the YMCA through the influence of Fielding Yost.

Viggo introduced competitive volleyball to Ann Arbor. The Ann Arbor YMCA had a competitive volleyball team that was well known around the country. This team won the National Volleyball championship in 1935. In 1954 the US Volleyball Association honored Viggo Nelson as one of three men in the US who had done the most to forward the game of volleyball. He was elected to the US Volleyball Hall of Fame in 1998.

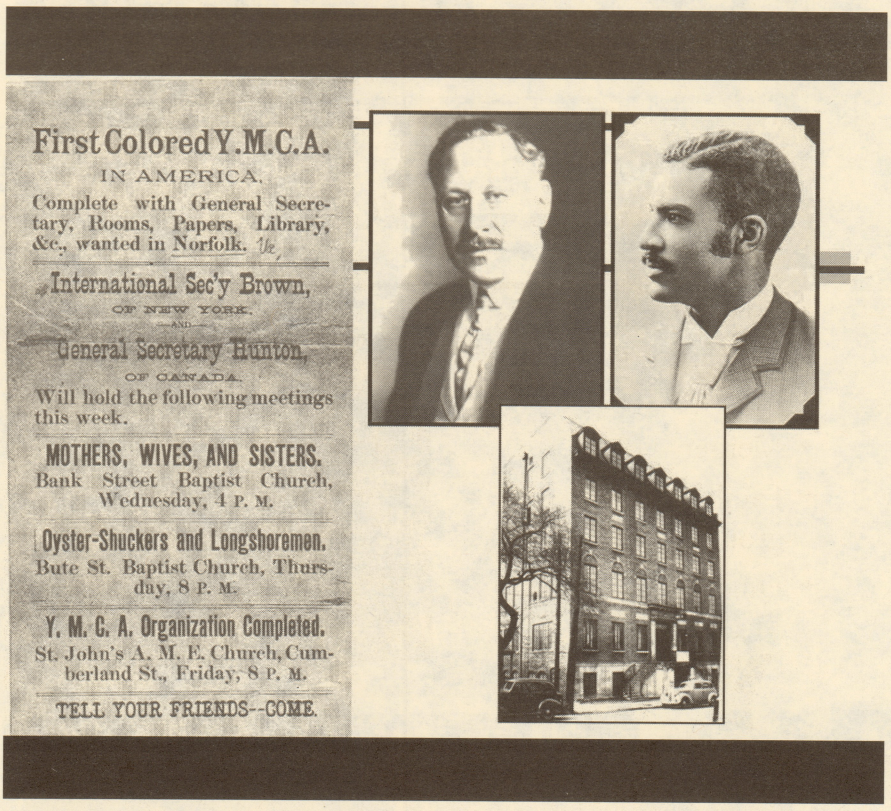


LEFT TOP:

YMCA Camp Birkett – Thomas Birkett and Big Silver Camp

Camp Birkett is the oldest organized camp in Washtenaw County. In 1914, Thomas Birkett of Dexter Township deeded the property, which consists of 11 acres of woods and lake frontage on the east shores of Silver Lake, to the Ann Arbor YMCA. It was originally called Big Silver Camp and the boys and their leaders camped in tents. A 10 day session cost $8 in 1914.

From 1922 – 1933 the Ann Arbor Kiwanis Club built the sleeping lodges that we use today. This was originally an all boy's camp, but became coed after the YMCA and YWCA merged.



First Colored Y.M.C.A.
IN AMERICA.
Complete with General Secretary, Rooms, Papers, Library, &c., wanted in Norfolk.

International Sec'y Brown,
OF NEW YORK.
AND
General Secretary Hunton,
OF CANADA.
Will hold the following meetings this week.

MOTHERS, WIVES, AND SISTERS.
Bank Street Baptist Church, Wednesday, 4 P. M.

Oyster-Shuckers and Longshoremen.
Bute St. Baptist Church, Thursday, 8 P. M.

Y. M. C. A. Organization Completed.
St. John's A. M. E. Church, Cumberland St., Friday, 8 P. M.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS--COME.

LEFT BOTTOM:

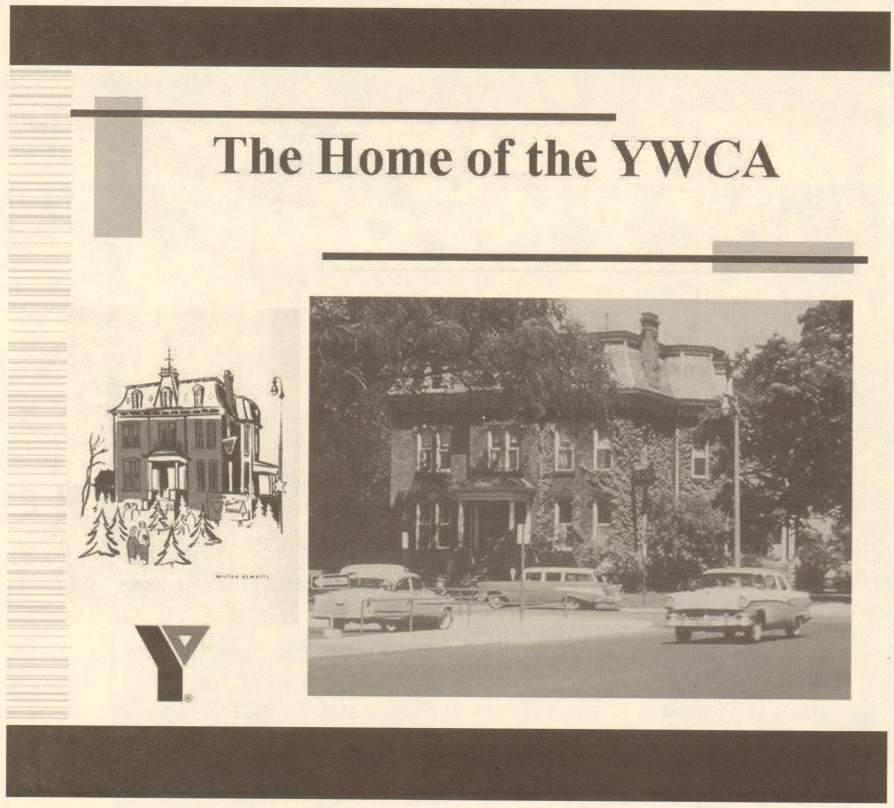
YMCAs early on discriminated or segregated: children….women… non-Christians…Catholics… people of color. "Negro YMCAs," as they were called, served the African American community like the one in image six. Jesse Hutton was the first person of color to join the national staff to help grow YMCAs in the black community.

Interestingly, it was the head of Sears Roebuck, Julius Rosenwald – a Jew – who put forth challenge money to support the founding of YMCAs for the black community.

RIGHT TOP:

Founded in Ann Arbor in 1894, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) was affiliated with the state YWCA in 1895, and became a charter member of the National Board in 1906.

The Association provided rooms and an employment bureau and offered classes to young women. Prior to its move into the former Christian Mack residence at 343 S. Fourth Avenue, the YWCA rented rooms above the First National Bank. The Mack house was home to the YWCA from 1913 until 1959, when it was razed, along with Trinity Lutheran Church and the parish house, to make way for the YM-YWCA building on S. Fifth Avenue.



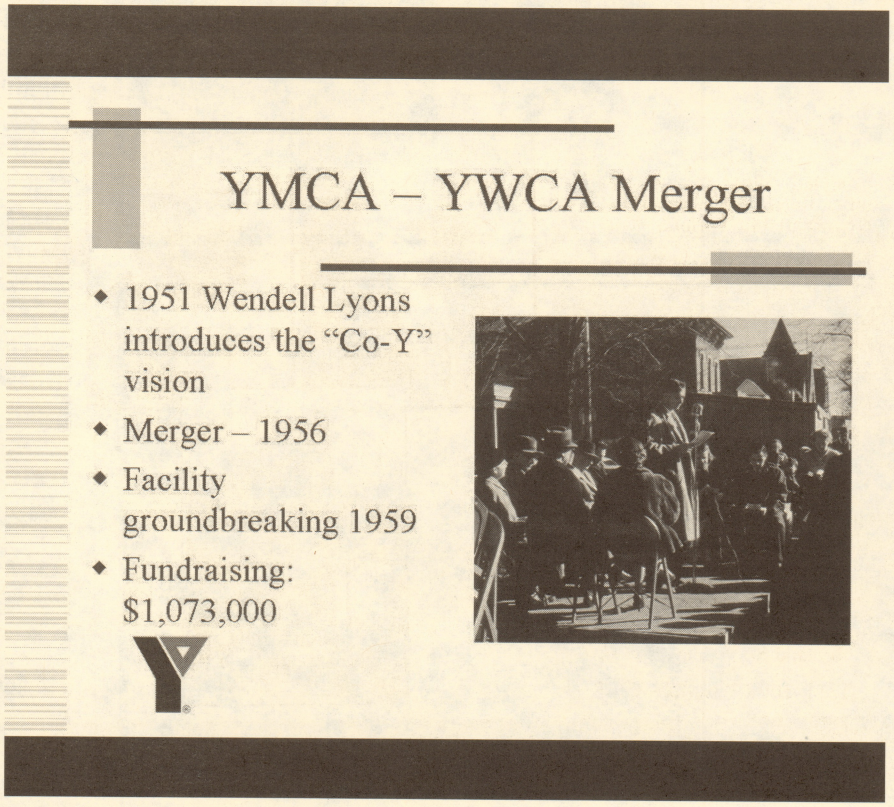
RIGHT BOTTOM:

YMCA-YWCA Merger. Wendell Lyons, Executive Secretary of the YMCA from 1951-1963, was the architect of the movement to merge the Ann Arbor YMCA and the YWCA.

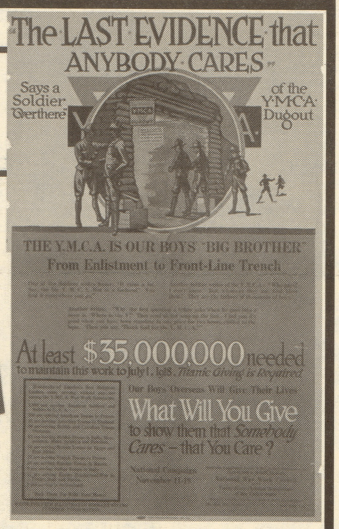
During the early '50s the boards of directors of both the YMCA and the YWCA recognized the need for new buildings and they decided to legally merge into one organization in 1956. The idea of combining both boards was innovative for its time and resulted in the newly merged organization being disaffiliated with the National Board of the YWCA.

The new organization brought equal representation of men and women to serve on the board and even today the by-laws state that the board should be 50% men and 50% women.

The "new YM-YWCA" was opened on S. Fifth Avenue in 1960 and served men and women, boys and girls.



World War I Relief Efforts



Ann Arbor YMCA

LEFT TOP:

If the Civil War was the Y infancy — World War I is its adolescence.

On April 6, 1917, the day the US entered the war, John Mott wrote to President Woodrow Wilson pledging to provide the vast majority of morale and welfare services to US servicemen. More than 26,000 Y volunteers served in the US and France — that out numbers our current full-time YMCA staff today! They set up 4,000 units to serve troops. (We have only 2,400 branches today)

LEFT MIDDLE:

The Y's fundraising was not only the first of its kind for war relief — leading to War Bond efforts in WWII — but it was the first YMCA effort to raise funds in a coordinated, comprehensive way.

Local capital campaigns and annual support campaigns are a direct legacy of these fund-raising efforts. The WWI effort is still among the largest private fundraising efforts ever. After WWI, the YMCA awarded $80,000 in educational scholarships to veterans, which led to the GI Bill after WWII.

LEFT BOTTOM:

The Ann Arbor YMCA is a non-profit membership association that serves over 24,000 people each year, half of whom are children under the age of 18. Celebrating 150 years in 2008, the Ann Arbor YMCA remains dedicated to helping individuals and families build healthy spirits, minds and bodies. YMCA programs promote member engagement, healthy lifestyles and community involvement.

For more information, visit www.annarborymca.org

Thank You!

to *The Ann Arbor News* for donating seven months' worth of paper for our newsletter.

In Memoriam

Nancy McKinney died on October 3, 2008 at Towsley Village in Chelsea, Michigan. Nancy served on the board of the Washtenaw County Historical Society for several years ending in 1999. She headed the committee that worked to develop preservation standards for our Museum on Main Street and policy for collection standards. She headed the collections committee and worked with our current curator, Judy Chrisman, at the Willow Run storage rooms evaluating the artifacts. She was a talented artist and was committed to the success of our Society.

Harriet Ann Wuerth Birch died on October 9, 2008. Harriet was elected Corresponding Secretary for the Society in the early 2000s and wrote the Thank You notes to donors. More recently, Harriet was a Director-at-Large. She was very proud of her family's history and enjoyed sharing family stories and photographs.

Harriet was a granddaughter of David Allmendinger, owner of Ann Arbor Organ Works. She was the proud owner of one of the 13 tables that her grandfather made from the historic, ancient oak tree that was cut down, around 1907, from in front of the family home on West Washington. David Allmendinger gave each of his 13 children one of the tables; Harriet inherited the one made for her mother, Rosa Allmendinger Wuerth.

Mystery Items Revealed

In the last issue we queried our readers if they knew the donor of the framed picture and the cast iron pot. Our friend and member, Carole Buttrum came forth and said that she was the donor. Thanks, Carole. We love these mysteries.

Upcoming Events

SALINE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Contact: Agnes: 734-944-0442 or 734-769-2219
eMail: SalineHistory@verizon.net • Web: www.SalineHistory.org

THE YEAR of the CAR • Wednesday, November 19, 2008 • 7:00 PM
Saline Senior Center Great Room, 7190 N. Maple Rd, Saline, MI

This is the third Education Program of the Fall season. 2008 has been designated the Year of the Car, so we invited Gary Familian of MotorCities National Heritage Area to speak to us about America's love of the automobile. Mr. Familian will explore automotive heritage throughout southeastern and central Michigan. He begins his story at the end of the 19th century. This should be a very interesting presentation.

Education Programs are always free and everyone is invited. Light refreshments will be served.

Look for green and white signs in the school parking lot. They will direct you to the Senior Center, which is on the back side of Saline Middle School. There is plenty of parking and no need to walk very far.

CHRISTMAS on the FARM • Saturday & Sunday, December 13 & 14, 2008. Saturday: Noon – 5 PM / Sunday: 1 – 4 PM. Rentschler Farm Museum, 1265 E. Michigan Ave., Saline, MI

See how farm families coped at Christmastime, when they were faced with a tight money situation during all the years of the Depression. Our 12-room farmhouse will be decorated with natural things that might have been found on the farm. A live tree will grace the parlor with genuine 1930's ornaments and lights. Simple window decorations, good aromas throughout the house, and pleasing sights and sounds will greet visitors as they enter the front door. The dining room table will display German-American foods, all made with farm products. Spinning and quilting will be demonstrated.
The Rentschler Farm Puzzle is still available for purchase at $12 each. This beautiful 500-piece puzzle, featuring a collage of farm event photographs, was published by the society in 2007. See a picture of the puzzle on our web site.

Light refreshments will be served in the gift shop, where Saline-related books and videos can also be found.

Directions: From I-94, take Exit 175 and go south on Ann Arbor-Saline Road about 6 miles to Saline. Turn left at Michigan Avenue and go one mile east to the farm. From U.S. 23, use Exit #34 (Michigan Ave. /Saline) and go west about 6 miles. The farm is located near Industrial Drive, next to the Sauk Trail Shopping Center. Limited parking is available on the farm property.

KEMPF HOUSE

312 S. Division St, Ann Arbor, MI • Contact: 734-994-4898
eMail: KempfHouseMuseum.gmail.com • Web: www.KempfHouseMuseum.org

WEDNESDAY NOON LECTURES

22 October 2008 • RAIN GARDENS. Harry Sheehan, Senior Environmental Manager for Washtenaw's Drain Commission will explain how the county's rain gardens provide pollution control.

29 October 2008 • TOXIC CHEMICALS and CHILDREN'S HEALTH. Genevieve Howe is the Children's Environmental Health Director for the Ecology Center of Ann Arbor. She will help us understand this timely issue.

5 November 2008 • THE STORY of 1528 PONTIAC TRAIL. A painter and preservationist, Pat McCauley will tell us what he found as he researched the c. 1840's house in which he lives, and about the work there that earned him a Rehabilitation Award from the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission.

12 November 2008 • CENTRAL MINE LOCATION in the COPPER COUNTRY. Keweenaw County Historical Society Trustee and Kempf House Events Director Duffy Liddicoat will describe how "ghost town" Central Mine has been saved and become a low-key tourist attraction.

MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET
A Museum Of County Life

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Post Office Box 3336
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-3336

YMCA – Serving the Ann Arbor Community for 150 Years
Exhibit runs to November 22, 2008
OPEN: Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday
Noon to 4 PM / & by appointment

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Ann Arbor, MI
Permit No. 96

SUNDAY • 2 PM • NOVEMBER 16, 2008

WCHS GENERAL MEETING

A HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN MEDICAL SCHOOL

ANN ARBOR DISTRICT LIBRARY
343 S. FIFTH AV.
ANN ARBOR, MI 48104

INFORMATION • 734.662.9092
www.WashtenawHistory.org

E M U ARCHIVES
310 HALLE LIBRARY - EMU
YPSILANTI MI 48197-2207

Make Note - Dates to Remember

2008-2009 General Meeting Schedule • 2:00 PM

Sun. Oct. 19 **Fox Gravel Pit – Ancient Botany / Geology**
John Russell / Washt Co Resource Ctr Library, Hogback Rd, 48104

Sun. Nov. 16 **A History of the University of Michigan Medical School**
Dr. David Bloom / Ann Arbor District Library, 343 S Fifth Av, 48104

Sun. Feb. 15 **Archeology of 1015 Wall Street & Lower Town**
Dr. Henry Wright / Exhibit Museum, 1109 Geddes Av, 48109

Sun. Mar. 15 **Transportation History Collection**
Kathleen Dow / Special Collections Library, 7th Floor Hatcher, 48109

Sun. Apr. 19 **The Toledo War.** *Don Faber / McKune Memorial Library, 221 S Main, Chelsea, 48118*

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Washtenaw County Historical Society is to foster interest in and to elucidate the history of Washtenaw County from the time of the original inhabitants to the present. Its mission shall be to carry out the mandate as stated through the preservation and presentation of artifacts and information by exhibit, assembly, and publication. And to teach, especially our youth, the facts, value and the uses of Washtenaw County history through exhibits in museums and classrooms, classes, tours to historical places, and other educational activities.